



UPCOUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

October 21, 2011

The Honorable Valerie Ervin, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Ms. Ervin:

I am writing on behalf of the Upcounty Citizen's Advisory Board (UCAB) regarding the County Executive Leggett's proposed Bill 25-11, which would establish a youth curfew in Montgomery County. Following a lengthy discussion spanning three meetings, the UCAB has voted to support the bill (by a vote of six to five) as written with current amendments.

The debate on both sides was open, knowledgeable, supported by research and facts, and sometimes emotional. Clearly, the bill contains provisions which will help deter juveniles from both committing crimes and being victims of crimes during the proposed curfew hours. The primary benefits of the bill include:

- It provides law enforcement officials with an additional tool to prevent crimes involving juveniles less than 18 years of age.
- The bill will detract juveniles from engaging in gang activity.
- By restricting hours that young people will be out in public, it will prevent minors from becoming victims of crimes.
- Applying a curfew reduces the incidence of minors from neighboring jurisdictions crossing into Montgomery County to avoid curfews where they live.
- Parental authority will be enhanced since parents will have justification for setting household limits on when a teen or pre-teen has to be home.
- A curfew is an attractive crime deterrent because there will be a negligible budgetary cost effect.
- Because of the high degree of training and professional experience by our Montgomery County Police Officers, the UCAB is confident that profiling of certain youth will not be an issue.

The concerns of the individuals opposed to the bill include the following:

- There is little evidence of a widespread problem.
- The proposed bill, if passed as written, may likely be challenged in court.

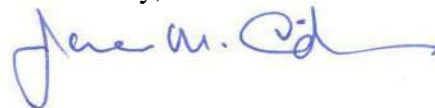
- There is no explicit mention of parental notification in the bill.
- There are too many exceptions in the bill, both in terms of acceptable activities wherein the curfew would not be invoked and actual jurisdictions where the bill would not apply at all.

During the discussion, various individuals submitted additional items for consideration. These included:

- A current assessment of juvenile crime/and crimes involving juveniles as victims should be provided with actual data along with projections/targets of crime reduction after implementation of the curfew.
- The county may want to consider a sunset date for the curfew some two or three years out from the date of initial implementation.
- A stronger curfew law containing fewer exceptions should be considered.
- Funding should be approved to conduct a multi-language awareness campaign.
- Clarify the impact on non-resident juveniles.
- Continue to pursue initiatives like the grant to acquire surveillance cameras for hot spots.
- Whenever possible pursue opportunities for positive youth development activities and include those activities within the curfew exemptions to encourage participation by juveniles.
- A process should be developed to expeditiously adjudicate complaints lodged under a curfew law.

As an advisory board, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input on matters under consideration before the County Council. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Juan M. Cardenas", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Juan Cardenas
Chair

Copy to: Mr. Leggett, County Executive